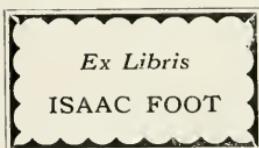




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IRISH POETS
OF TO-DAY
AN ANTHOLOGY

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

VERSE—SPEEDWELL (1918)
TURQUOISE (1919)

*Editor of AN ANTHOLOGY OF
RECENT POETRY (1920) Illus-
trated Edition, "THE YEARS
AT THE SPRING"*

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO
WILTSHIRE (1921)

IRISH POETS OF TO-DAY

AN ANTHOLOGY

COMPILED BY
L. D'O. WALTERS

T. FISHER UNWIN LTD
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TR855
125

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TO MY SON

AND

A. E.



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NOTE

The majority of these poems have been selected by me, but in a few instances the poet himself has expressed a wish that some particular poem or poems should be included, and I have abided readily by his choice.

My thanks to both Authors and Publishers will be found on another page, but here I would thank expressly A. E., Messrs. Maunsel & Roberts, and The Talbot Press for the help they have given me, and for the courtesy they have shown me, while I have been compiling this Anthology.

L. D'O. WALTERS.

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Arranged under names of Authors

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IRISH POETS OF TO-DAY
AN ANTHOLOGY

A.E.

A CALL

DUSK its ash-grey blossoms sheds on violet skies,
Over twilight mountains where the heart songs rise,
Rise and fall and fade away from earth to air.
Earth renews the music sweeter. Oh, come there.
Come, acushla, come, as in ancient times
Rings aloud the underland with faery chimes.
Down the unseen ways as strays each tinkling fleece
Winding ever onward to a fold of peace,
So my dreams go straying in a land more fair ;
Half I tread the dew-wet grasses, half wander there.
Fade your glimmering eyes in a world grown cold ;
Come, acushla, with me to the mountains old.
There the bright ones call us waving to and fro—
Come, my children, with me to the ancient go.

AWAKENING

THE lights shone down the street
In the long blue close of day :
A boy's heart beat sweet, sweet,
As it flowered in its dreamy clay.

Beyond the dazzling throng
And above the towers of men
The stars made him long, long,
To return to their light again.

They lit the wondrous years
And his heart within was gay ;
But a life of tears, tears,
He had won for himself that day.

A. E.

CARROWMORE

It's a lonely road through bogland to the lake at
Carrowmore,
And a sleeper there lies dreaming where the water
laps the shore ;
Though the moth-wings of the twilight in their
purples are unfurled,
Yet his sleep is filled with music by the masters of
the world.

There's a hand is white as silver that is fondling
with his hair :
There are glimmering feet of sunshine that are dancing
by him there :
And half-open lips of faery that were dyed a faery
red
In their revels where the Hazel Tree its holy clusters
shed.

“ Come away,” the red lips whisper, “ all the world
is weary now ;
’Tis the twilight of the ages and it’s time to quit
the plough.
Oh, the very sunlight’s weary ere it lightens up the
dew,
And its gold is changed and faded before it falls to
you.

A. E.

“ Though your colleen’s heart be tender, a tenderer
heart is near.
What’s the starlight in her glances when the stars
are shining clear ?
Who would kiss the fading shadow when the flower-
face glows above ?
'Tis the beauty of all Beauty that is calling for
your love.”

Oh ! the great gates of the mountain have opened
once again,
And the sound of song and dancing falls upon the ears
of men,
And the Land of Youth lies gleaming, flushed with
rainbow light and mirth,
And the old enchantment lingers in the honey-heart
of earth.

A. E.

IN THE WOMB

STILL rests the heavy share on the dark soil :
Upon the black mould thick the dew-damp lies :
The horse waits patient : from his lowly toil
The ploughboy to the morning lifts his eyes.

The unbudding hedgerows dark against day's fires
Glitter with gold-lit crystals : on the rim
Over the unregarding city's spires
The lonely beauty shines alone for him.

And day by day the dawn or dark enfolds
And feeds with beauty eyes that cannot see
How in her womb the mighty mother moulds
The infant spirit for eternity.

THE
GIFT

I THOUGHT, beloved, to have brought to you
A gift of quietness and ease and peace,
Cooling your brow as with the mystic dew
Dropping from the twilight trees.

Homeward I go not yet ; the darkness grows ;
Not mine the voice to still with peace divine :
From the first fount the stream of quiet flows
Through other hearts than mine.

Yet of my night I give to you the stars,
And of my sorrow here the sweetest gains,
And out of hell, beyond its iron bars,
My scorn of all its pains.

THE VISION
OF LOVE

THE twilight fleeted away in pearl on the stream,
And night, like a diamond dome, stood still in our
dream.

Your eyes like burnished stones or as stars were
bright

With the sudden vision that made us one with the
night.

We loved in infinite spaces, forgetting here
The breasts that were lit with life and the lips so
near ;

Till the wizard willows waved in the wind and drew
Me away from the fulness of love and down to you.

Our love was so vast that it filled the heavens up :
But the soft white fear I held was an empty cup,
When the willows called me back to earth with their
sigh,

And we moved as shades through the deep that was
you and I.

THOMAS BOYD

TO THE LEANÁN SIDHE ¹

WHERE is thy lovely perilous abode ?

In what strange phantom-land
Glimmer the fairy turrets whereto rode
The ill-starred poet band ?

Say, in the Isle of Youth hast thou thy home,
The sweetest singer there,
Stealing on wingéd steed across the foam
Through the moonlit air ?

Or, where the mists of bluebell float beneath
The red stems of the pine,
And sunbeams strike thro' shadow, dost thou
breathe
The word that makes him thine ?

Or by the gloomy peaks of Erigal,
Haunted by storm and cloud,
Wing past, and to thy lover there let fall
His singing-robe and shroud ?

Or, is thy palace entered thro' some cliff
When radiant tides are full,
And round thy lover's wandering, starlit skiff,
Coil in luxurious lull ?

¹ "The Fairy Bride," pronounced *Lenawn Shee*.

THOMAS BOYD

And would he, entering on the brimming flood,
See caverns vast in height,
And diamond columns, crowned with leaf and bud,
Glow in long lanes of light,

And there, the pearl of that great glittering shell
Trembling, behold thee lone,
Now weaving in slow dance an awful spell,
Now still upon thy throne ?

Thy beauty ! ah, the eyes that pierce him thro'
Then melt as in a dream ;
The voice that sings the mysteries of the blue
And all that Be and Seem !

Thy lovely motions answering to the rhyme
That ancient Nature sings,
That keeps the stars in cadence for all time,
And echoes thro' all things !

Whether he sees thee thus, or in his dreams,
Thy light makes all lights dim ;
An aching solitude from henceforth seems
The world of men to him.

Thy luring song, above the sensuous roar,
He follows with delight,
Shutting behind him Life's last gloomy door,
And fares into the Night.

JOSEPH CAMPBELL

THE OLD WOMAN

As a white candle
In a holy place,
So is the beauty
Of an agèd face.

As the spent radiance
Of the winter sun,
So is a woman
With her travail done.

Her brood gone from her
And her thoughts as still
As the waters
Under a ruined mill.

PATRICK R. CHALMERS

THE ROAD

“Now where are ye goin’,” ses I, “wid the shawl
An’ cotton umbrella an’ basket an’ all ?
Would ye not wait for McMullen’s machine,
Wid that iligant instep befittin’ a queen ?

Oh, you wid the wind-soft grey eye wid a wile
in it,

You wid the lip wid the troublesome smile in it,
Sure, the road’s wet, ivery rain-muddied mile
in it——”

“Ah, the Saints ’ll be kapin’ me petticoats clean ! ”

“But,” ses I, “would ye like it to meet Glancy’s
bull,
Or the tinks poachin’ rabbits above Slieve-na-coul ?
An’ the ford at Kilmaddy is big wid the snows,
An’ the whisht Little People that wear the green
close,

They’d run from the bog to be makin’ a catch
o’ ye,

The king o’ them’s wishful o’ weddin’ the match
o’ ye,

’Twould be long, if they did, ’ere ye lifted the
latch o’ ye——”

“What fairy’s to touch her that sings as she goes ! ”

PATRICK R. CHALMERS

“ Ah, where are ye goin’,” ses I, “ wid the shawl,
An’ the grey eyes a-dreamin’ beneath it an’ all ?
The road by the mountain’s a long one, depend
Ye’ll be done for, alannah, ere reachin’ the end ;
 Ye’ll be bate wid the wind on each back-breakin’
 bit on it,
Wet wid the puddles and lamed with the grit
 on it,—
Since lonesome ye’re layin’ yer delicut fit on
 it——”

“ *Sure whin’s a road lonesome that’s stepped wid a friend ?* ”

That’s stepped wid a friend ?
Who did Bridgy intend ?
Still ’t was me that went wid her right on to the
end !

NORA CHESSON

THE SHORT CUT TO ROSSES

By the short cut to Rosses a fairy girl I met,
I was taken in her beauty as a fish is in a net.
The fern uncurled to look at her, so very fair was
she,
With her hair as bright as seaweed new-drawn from
out the sea.

By the short cut to Rosses ('twas on the first of
May)
I heard the fairies piping, and they piped my heart
away ;
They piped till I was mad with joy, but when I was
alone
I found my heart was piped away and in my breast
a stone.

By the short cut to Rosses 'tis I'll go never more,
Lest she should also steal my soul that stole my
heart before,
Lest she take my soul and crush it like a dead leaf
in her hand,
For the short cut to Rosses is the way to Fairyland.

AUSTIN CLARKE

THE VENGEANCE OF FIONN

Part VI. Lines 19-71.

IN the sleepy forest where the bluebells
Smouldered dimly through the night,
Diarmuid saw the leaves like glad green waters
At daybreak flowing into light,
And exultant from his love upspringing
Strode with the sun upon the height.

Glittering on the hilltops
He saw the sunlit rain
Drift as around the spindle
A silver-threaded skein,
And the brown mist whitely breaking
Where arrowy torrents reached the plain.

A maddened moon
Leapt in his heart and whirled the crimson tide
Of his blood until it sang aloud of battle
Where the querns of dark death grind,
Till it sang and scorned in pride
Love—the froth-pale blossom of the boglands
That flutters on the waves of the wandering
wind.

AUSTIN CLARKE

Flower-quiet in the rush-strewn sheiling
At the dawntime Grainne lay,
While beneath the birch-topped roof the
sunlight
Groped upon its way
And stooped above her sleeping white body
With a wasp-yellow ray.

The hot breath of the day awoke her,
And wearied of its heat
She wandered out by noisy elms
On the cool mossy peat,
Where the shadowed leaves like pecking linnets
Nodded around her feet.

She leaned and saw in pale-grey waters,
By twisted hazel boughs,
Her lips like heavy drooping poppies
In a rich redness drowse,
Then swallow-lightly touched the ripples
Until her wet lips were
Burning as ripened rowan berries
Through the white winter air.

Lazily she lingered
Gazing so,
As the slender osiers
Where the waters flow,
As green twigs of sally
Swaying to and fro.

AUSTIN CLARKE

Sleepy moths fluttered
In her dark eyes,
And her lips grew quieter
Than lullabies.
Swaying with the reedgrass
Over the stream
Lazily she lingered
Cradling a dream.

PADRAIC COLUM

A CRADLE SONG

O, men from the fields !
Come gently within.
Tread softly, softly,
O ! men coming in.

Mavourneen is going
From me and from you,
Where Mary will fold him
With mantle of blue !

From reek of the smoke
And cold of the floor,
And the peering of things
Across the half-door.

O, men from the fields !
Soft, softly come thro'.
Mary puts round him
Her mantle of blue.

PADRAIC COLUM

A DROVER

To Meath of the pastures,
From wet hills of the sea,
Through Leitrim and Longford,
Go my cattle and me.

I hear in the darkness
Their slipping and breathing—
I name them the bye-ways
They're to pass without heeding ;

Then the wet, winding roads,
Brown bogs with black water ;
And my thoughts on white ships
And the King o' Spain's daughter.

O ! farmer, strong farmer !
You can spend at the fair ;
But your face you must turn
To your crops and your care.

And soldiers—red soldiers !
You've seen many lands ;
But you walk two by two,
And by captain's commands.

PADRAIC COLUM

O ! the smell of the beasts,
The wet wind in the morn ;
And the proud and hard earth
Never broken for corn ;

And the crowds at the fair,
The herds loosened and blind,
Loud words and dark faces
And the wild blood behind.

(O ! strong men, with your best
I would strive breast to breast.
I could quiet your herds
With my words, with my words.)

I will bring you, my kine,
Where there's grass to the knee ;
But you'll think of scant croppings
Harsh with salt of the sea.

PADRAIC COLUM

AN OLD WOMAN OF THE ROADS

O ! to have a little house !
To own the hearth and stool and all !
The heaped up sods upon the fire,
The pile of turf against the wall !

To have a clock with weights and chains
And pendulum swinging up and down !
A dresser filled with shining delph,
Speckled and white and blue and brown !

I could be busy all the day
Clearing and sweeping hearth and floor,
And fixing on their shelf again
My white and blue and speckled store !

I could be quiet there at night
Beside the fire and by myself,
Sure of a bed and loth to leave
The ticking clock and the shining delph !

Och ! but I'm weary of mist and dark,
And roads where there's never a house nor bush,
And tired I am of bog and road,
And the crying wind and the lonesome hush !

PADRAIC COLUM

And I am praying to God on high,
And I am praying Him night and day,
For a little house—a house of my own—
Out of the wind's and the rain's way.

JAMES H. COUSINS

HIGH AND LOW

HE stumbled home from Clifden fair
With drunken song, and cheeks aglow.
Yet there was something in his air
That told of kingship long ago.
I sighed—and inly cried
With grief that one so high should fall so low.

He snatched a flower and sniffed its scent,
And waved it toward the sunset sky.
Some old sweet rapture thro' him went
And kindled in his bloodshot eye.
I turned—and inly burned
With joy that one so low should rise so high.

JAMES H. COUSINS

THE CORNCRAKE

I HEARD him faintly, far away,
(*Break ! Break !—Break ! Break !*)
Calling to the dawn of day,
“ Break ! Break ! ”

I heard him in the yellow morn
(*Shake ! Shake !—Shake ! Shake !*)
Shouting thro’ the rustling corn,
“ Shake ! Shake ! ”

I heard him near where one lay dead
(*Ache ! Ache !*)
Crying among poppies red,
“ Ache ! Ache !—Ache ! Ache ! ”

And where a solemn yew-tree waves
(*Wake ! Wake !*)
All night he shouts among the graves,
“ Wake ! Wake !—Wake ! Wake ! ”

H. L. DOAK

THE BEGGAR

If I had a farm, an' no need to be beggin' my bread,
I'd work till my fingers were all wore away to the
bone.

It wouldn't be me you would see lyin' long in my
bed ;

I'd be out by the squeak o' the day, lookin' after
my own.

But the pride of industry flies out at the raggedy
holes

In a coat an' a trousers an' maybe the half of a
shirt.

You rich, let you wear to a shadow your bodies an'
souls ;

The beggar is happy to lie on his back in the dirt.

*From H. L. Doak's "The Three-Rock Road," by kind
permission of The Talbot Press, Ltd., Dublin.*

DARRELL FIGGIS

BOGAĆ BÁN

A WOMAN had I seen as I rode by,
Stacking her turf and chanting an old song ;
But now her voice came to me like a cry
Wailing an old immeasurable wrong,
Riding the road thro' Bogać bán.

Like a grey ribbon over the dark world,
Lying along the bog that rose each side,
The white road strayed upon the earth, and curled,
Staying its journey where the hills abide,
Riding the road thro' Bogać bán.

It was not that the Night had laid her cloak
About the valley, going thro' the sky,
And yet a dimness like a distant smoke
Had fallen on the Earth as I rode by.
Riding the road thro' Bogać bán.

Sweeping the sides of the mountains gaunt and high,
Floating about their faces in the pool,
A shadowy presence with a rustling sigh
Crept thro' the valley till the valley was full :
My horse's hoofs fell softly as on wool :
Riding the road thro' Bogać bán.

DARRELL FIGGIS

In musical measures like an echo dim
The hosting held its secret path unseen :
Sliabh Mór looked down to Máṁ, and Máṁ to him
Looked up, with Loch na n'Ean between :
Riding the road thro' Bogač bán.

A new world and a new scene mixed its power
With the old world and the old scene of Earth's face :
A doorway had been folded back an hour ;
And silver lights fell with a secret grace
Where I endeavoured the white path to trace
Riding the road thro' Bogač bán.

Within my mind a sudden joy had birth,
For I had found an infinite company there :
The hosting of the companies of the earth,
The hosting of the companies of the air,
Riding the road thro' Bogač bán.
The white, strange road thro' Bogač bán.

DARRELL FIGGIS

INISGALLUN

THE winds are roaring out of the West
Where the clouds are in stormy saffron drest,
And the curlew and wild-geese are calling and crying
Over the straits in Inisgallun,
The heron and cormorant wailing and sighing,
Mingling a wild and an endless tune.

The winds are roaring out of the West
Over the waters of strife and unrest,
The shrieking rain in the low pools falling,
The strong waves beating a ceaseless rune,
And the heron and curlew and wild-geese calling,
Vainly lamenting in Inisgallun.

The froth and fume of the maddened sea
Spit thro' the torn air ceaselessly ;
And the dark low bog in anguish crying,
And the heather wailing in bitter pain ;
For the winds from out of the West are flying
And the Earth will never find peace again.

EVA GORE-BOOTH

TO DORA SIGERSON SHORTER

"THE SAD YEARS"

You whom I never knew,
Who lived remote, afar,
Yet died of the grief that tore my heart,
Shall we live through the ages alone, apart,
Or meet where the souls of the sorrowful are
Telling the tale on some secret star,
How your death from the root of my sorrow grew—
You whom I never knew.

Nay, perhaps in the coming years,
Down here on our earth again,
We shall meet as strangers on some strange shore,
And dream we have known one another before,
In a past life, weeping over the slain—
Because of a thrill and a throb of pain,
And eyes grown suddenly salt with tears . . .
Perhaps . . . in the coming years. . . .

PADRIC GREGORY

DOUBT OF REMEMBRANCE

IF I, who loathe my remnant of sad days,
Could make her hear who lies beneath the sod,
Could call her spirit from the starry-ways,
Could pluck her from the shielding Arms of God.

Could let her breathe again the April wind,
Or hear the patt'ring of soft summer rain,
Should call her back to all she left behind . . .
Oh, would her coming give my heart more pain ?

Oh, would her eyes scan all the ambered South,
And sweep, tear-filled, the dark hill-shadowing sea,
And nothing else ? Oh, would she kiss my mouth ?
Oh, God ! oh God ! Would she remember me ?

PADRIC GREGORY

THE DREAM-TELLER

I WAS a dreamer : I dreamed
A dream at the dark of dawn,
When the stars hung over the mountains
And morn was wan.

I dreamed my dream at morn,
At noon, at the even-light,
But I told it to you, dark woman,
One soft glad night.

And the sharing of my dream
Has brought me only this :
The gnawing pain of loss, the ache
For your mouth to kiss.

I walked the high hills last night,
And lo, where the pale stars gleam,
God's cold Voice spake : " If you dream again,
Tell none your dream ;
Tell none your dream ! "

PADRIC GREGORY

THE WARNIN'S

OCHANNEE, ochannee,
Ye say he's dead. God rest his sowl !
But mind ye this : I thought he'd be ;
For yesterday at dinner-time our oul'
Black clock, that's sittin' on the kitchen shelf,
An' hasnae worked for years, struck three ;
An' the Blessid Mother o' God, herself
Alone, knows how it frightened me.

Thin last night, whin I wint tae bed,
A score o' times I crossed m'self ;
For some strange dog comminced tae howl
Furmust the dure ;
An' in the hen-house all the fowl
Seemed restless ; an' my beads I said
For William John ; for I felt sure
That he was dead.
Ochannee, ochannee,
God rest his soul !

ISOBEL HUME (I. H. Fisher)

HOME-COMING

I AM come home again
Back to the old grey town,
Battling with wind and rain
As I go up and down.

I am come from the South,
With never a greeting said,
And no one to kiss my mouth
Now that my love is dead.

As I go up and down
In the loud wind and rain,
Through the familiar town
He walks with me again.

A woman robbed of her youth—
The ghost of a lad long dead,
With never a kiss on my mouth,
And never a greeting said.

ISOBEL HUME (I. H. Fisher)

THE SLEEPER

UNDER white eyelids
The dreams come and go,
Kiss her on her rosy mouth,
And wake her so.

Under white eyelids
The dreams are all done,
Fold her hands across her breast—
Let her sleep on.

DOUGLAS HYDE

IF I WERE TO GO WEST

IF I were to go west, it is from the west I
would not come,

On the hill that was highest, 'tis on it I would stand,
It is the fragrant branch I would soonest pluck,
And it is my own love I would quickest follow.

My heart is as black as a sloe,
Or as a black coal that would be burnt in a forge,
As the sole of a shoe upon white halls,
And there is great melancholy over my laugh.

My heart is bruised, broken,
Like ice upon the top of water,
As it were a cluster of nuts after their breaking,
Or a young maiden after her marrying.

My love is of the colour of the blackberries,
And the colour of the raspberry on a fine sunny
day.
Of the colour of the darkest heath-berries of the
mountain,
And often has there been a black head upon a bright
body.

DOUGLAS HYDE

Time it is for me to leave this town,
The stone is sharp in it, and the mould is cold ;
It was in it I got a voice (blame), without riches
And a heavy word from the band who back-bite.

I denounce love ; woe is she who gave it
To the son of yon woman, who never understood it.
My heart in my middle, sure he has left it black,
And I do not see him on the street or in any place.

DOUGLAS HYDE

RINGLETED YOUTH OF MY LOVE

RINGLETED youth of my love,
With thy locks bound loosely behind thee,
You passed by the road above,
But you never came in to find me ;
Where were the harm for you
If you came for a little to see me,
Your kiss is a wakening dew
Were I ever so ill or so dreamy.

If I had golden store
I would make a nice little boreen
To lead straight up to his door,
The door of the house of my storeen ;
Hoping to God not to miss
The sound of his footfall in it,
I have waited so long for his kiss
That for days I have slept not a minute.

I thought, O my love ! You were so—
As the moon is, or sun on a fountain,
And I thought after that you were snow,
The cold snow on top of the mountain ;

DOUGLAS HYDE

And I thought after that, you were more
Like God's lamp shining to find me,
Or the bright star of knowledge before,
And the star of knowledge behind me.

You promised me high-heeled shoes,
And satin and silk, my storeen,
And to follow me, never to lose,
Though the ocean were round us roaring ;
Like a bush in a gap in a wall
I am now left lonely without thee,
And this house I grow dead of, is all
That I see around or about me.

DOUGLAS HYDE

THE COOLEEN, OR COOLUN

A HONEY mist on a day of frost, in a dark oak wood,
And love for thee in my heart in me, thou bright, white, and good ;
Thy slender form, soft and warm, thy red lips apart,
Thou hast found me, and hast bound me, and put grief in my heart.

In fair-green and market, men mark thee, bright, young, and merry,
Though thou hurt them like foes with the rose of thy blush of the berry ;
Her cheeks are a poppy, her eye it is Cupid's helper,
But each foolish man dreams that its beams for himself are.

Whoe'er saw the Cooleen in a cool dewy meadow
On a morning in summer in sunshine and shadow ;
All the young men go wild for her, my childeen, my treasure.
But now let them go mope, they've no hope to possess her.

DOUGLAS HYDE

Let us roam, O my darling, afar through the mountains,
Drink milk of the goat, wine and bulcaun in fountains ;
With music and play every day from my lyre,
And leave to come rest on my breast when you tire.

LIONEL JOHNSON

DEAD

To Olivier Georges Destréé

In Merioneth, over the sad moor
Drives the rain, the cold wind blows :
Past the ruinous church door,
The poor procession without music goes.

Lonely she wandered out her hour, and died.
Now the mournful curlew cries
Over her, laid down beside
Death's lonely people : lightly down she lies.

In Merioneth, the wind lives and wails,
On from hill to lonely hill ;
Down the loud, triumphant gales,
A spirit cries *Be strong !* and cries *Be still !*

LIONEL JOHNSON

TO
MORFYDD

A VOICE on the winds,
A voice by the waters,
Wanders and cries :
Oh ! what are the winds ?
And what are the waters ?
Mine are your eyes !

Western the winds are,
And western the waters,
Where the light lies :
Oh ! what are the winds ?
And what are the waters ?
Mine are your eyes !

Cold, cold, grow the winds,
And wild grow the waters,
Where the sun dies :
Oh ! what are the winds ?
And what are the waters ?
Mine are your eyes !

LIONEL JOHNSON

And down the night winds,
And down the night waters,
The music flies :

*Oh ! what are the winds ?
And what are the waters ?
Cold be the winds,
And wild be the waters,
So mine be your eyes !*

LIONEL JOHNSON

“ TO WEEP IRISH ”

To the Rev. Dr. William Barry

LONG Irish melancholy of lament !
Voice of the sorrow, that is on the sea :
Voice of that ancient mourning music sent
From Rama childless : the world wails in thee.

The sadness of all beauty at the heart,
The appealing of all souls unto the skies,
The longing locked in each man's breast apart,
Weep in the melody of thine old cries.

Mother of tears ! sweet Mother of sad sons !
All mourners of the world weep Irish, weep
Ever with thee : while burdened time still runs,
Sorrows reach God through thee, and ask for sleep.

And though thine own unsleeping sorrow yet
Live to the end of burdened time, in pain :
Still sing the song of sorrow ! and forget
The sorrow, in the solace, of the strain.

FRANCIS LEDWIDGE

DESIRE IN SPRING

I LOVE the cradle songs the mothers sing
In lonely places when the twilight drops,
The slow endearing melodies that bring
Sleep to the weeping lids ; and, when she stops,
I love the roadside birds upon the tops
Of dusty hedges in a world of Spring.

And when the sunny rain drips from the edge
Of midday wind, and meadows lean one way,
And a long whisper passes thro' the sedge,
Beside the broken water let me stay,
While these old airs upon my memory play,
And silent changes colour up the hedge.

FRANCIS LEDWIDGE

MY MOTHER

GOD made my mother on an April day,
From sorrow and the mist along the sea,
Lost birds' and wanderers' songs and ocean spray,
And the moon loved her wandering jealously.

Beside the ocean's din she combed her hair,
Singing the nocturne of the passing ships,
Before her earthly lover found her there
And kissed away the music from her lips.

She came unto the hills and saw the change
That brings the swallow and the geese in turns.
But there was not a grief she deeméd strange,
For there is that in her which always mourns.

Kind heart she has for all on hill or wave
Whose hopes grew wings like ants to fly away.
I bless the God Who such a mother gave
This poor bird-hearted singer of a day.

SHANE LESLIE

FLEET STREET

I NEVER see the newsboys run
Amid the whirling street,
With swift untiring feet,
To cry the latest venture done,
But I expect one day to hear
 Them cry the crack of doom
 And risings from the tomb,
With great Archangel Michael near ;
And see them running from the Fleet
 As messengers of God,
 With Heaven's tidings shod
About their brave unwearied feet.

SHANE LESLIE

FOREST SONG

ALL around I heard the whispering larches
Swinging to the low-lipped wind ;
God, they piped, is lilting in our arches,
For He loveth leafen kind.

Ferns I heard, unfolding from their slumber,
Say confiding to the reed :
God well knoweth us, Who loves to number
Us and all our fairy seed.

Voices hummed as of a multitude
Crowding from their lowly sod ;
'Twas the stricken daisies where I stood,
Crying to the daisies' God.

SHANE LESLIE

HOLY CROSS

It is the bare and leafless Tree
Our sins once sowed on Calvary,
And mockers digged with trembling knee—
 Holy Cross.

It is the dead unpitying Wood,
That like a crimson pillar stood,
Where none unmoved unweeping could—
 Holy Cross.

O fearful sight foretold to man,
The cloven spar, the sacred span,
Whence God's atoning Blood once ran—
 Holy Cross.

It is the Holy Gibbet Tree,
All stained with Love's last agony
And marked with awful mystery—
 Holy Cross.

What stains are these incarnadine,
What scars are these more red than wine
Of more than human Passion sign ?
 Holy Cross.

SHANE LESLIE

It is the sunless stricken Tree,
Upon whose branches sore to see
O mystery, died One of Three—
 Holy Cross.

What storm swept o'er its boughs that day,
When God to God did sorely pray,
And human guilt ebbed slow away—
 Holy Cross.

When earth shall smoke and sun shall flee,
Alone unmoved o'er sinking sea
Shall stand one all-redeeming Tree—
 Holy Cross.

SHANE LESLIE

MUCKISH MOUNTAIN

LIKE a sleeping swine upon the skyline,
Muckish, thou art shadowed out,
Grubbing up the rubble of the ages
With your broken, granite snout.

Muckish, greatest pig in Ulster's oakwoods,
Littered out of rock and fire,
Deep you thrust your mottled flanks for cooling
Underneath the peaty mire.

Long before the Gael was young in Ireland,
You were ribbed and old and grey,
Muckish, you have long outstayed his staying,
You have seen him swept away.

Muckish, you will not forget the people
Of the laughing speech and eye,
They who gave you name of Pig-back-mountain
And the Heavens for a sty !

W. M. LETTS

BOYS

I do be thinking God must laugh
The time He makes a boy ;
All element the creatures are,
And divilmint and joy.
Careless and gay as a wad in a window,¹
Swift as a redshanks, and wild as a hare ;
Heartscalds and torments—but sorra a mother
Has got one to spare.

¹ “Wad in a window.” The bunch of rags so often seen fluttering from the broken windows of an Irish cabin ; hence the frequent use of this comparison.

W. M. LETTS

IN THE STREET

I'VE seen a woman kneeling down
In the dirty street.
An' she took no heed of her tattered gown,
Or the broken boots on her feet ;
An' she took no heed of the people there,
Rich and poor that would stand and stare
At a woman kneeling in prayer
In the street.

For the thing that she spied
At the back of the great shop window pane
Was a cross with a Figure crucified.
She took no heed of the driving rain,
An' thim that would turn to look again ;
She took no heed of the noisy street,
But knelt down there at her Saviour's feet.
What matter at all what the place might be ?
To one poor soul it was Calvary.

W. M. LETTS

IRISH SKIES

IN London here the streets are grey, an' grey the sky above ;

I wish I were in Ireland to see the skies I love—

Pearl cloud, buff cloud, the colour of a dove.

All day I travel English streets, but in my dreams I tread

The far Glencullen road and see the soft sky overhead,

Grey clouds, white clouds, the wind has shepherded.

At night the London lamps shine bright, but what are they to me ?

I've seen the moonlight in Glendhu, the stars above Glenchree—

The lamps of Heav'n give light enough for me.

The city in the winter time puts on a shroud of smoke,

But the sky above the Three rock was blue as Mary's cloak,

Ruffled like dove's wings when the wind awoke.

W. M. LETTS

I dream I see the Wicklow hills by evening sunlight
kissed,
An' every glen and valley there brimful of radiant
mist—
The jewelled sky topaz and amethyst.

I wake to see the London streets, the sombre sky
above,
God's blessing on the far-off roads, and on the skies
I love,—
Pearl feather, grey feather, wings of a dove.

W. M. LETTS

THE HARBOUR

I THINK if I lay dying in some land
Where Ireland is no more than just a name,
My soul would travel back to find that strand
From whence it came.

I'd see the harbour in the evening light,
The old men staring at some distant ship,
The fishing-boats they fasten left and right
Beside the slip.

The sea-wrack lying on the wind-swept shore,
The grey thorn bushes growing in the sand
Our Wexford coast from Arklow to Cahore—
My native land.

The little houses climbing up the hill,
Sea daisies growing in the sandy grass,
The tethered goats that wait large-eyed and still
To watch you pass.

The women at the well with dripping pails,
Their men colloquing by the harbour wall,
The coils of rope, the nets, the old brown sails,
I'd know them all.

W. M. LETTS

And then the Angelus—I'd surely see
The swaying bell against a golden sky,
So God, Who kept the love of home in me,
Would let me die.

EDWARD E. LYSAGHT

THE MARCH FAIR

THREE o'clock, and with a start
I waken, cursing fair and mart.
And the bullocks, if they knew,
Surely would be cursing too ;
Seven English miles have they,
Long before the dawn of day,
More than seven miles to tramp.
(Where the devil is the lamp ?)
Bullocks ! In your innocence
Yours a day of abstinence.
Two long grey hours 'twill take of you
Before you land in Killaloe.
Then when we're there we'll stand forlorn
Like long wooed sheep that have been shorn,
 Too early in the summer.
'Tis eight o'clock and ne'er a bid :
What fools to come—yet well we did,
For out from yonder caravan,
Where Mrs. Browne wields her tin-can
And serves cold herrings, tea and bread
To Michael, Paddy, Tom and Ned,
There comes a man who's slep' it out :
He's a shipper, there's no doubt.

EDWARD E. LYSAGHT

I know him, sure, 'tis Johnny Curtin,
He'll buy our cattle now for certain.
I ask a hundred for the ten,
He scans them slightly and then
He turned away without a word.
I wink my eye to Mick, the herd.
"Come here, I want you, Sir," cries he,
"What is the bullocks' price to be?"
—"They're not worth nine." But Jim Molony
(We all know Jim, the poor old crony)
Puts in his word without a smile:
"I don't care which, but wait awhile
Ask nine fifteen and cut a crown."
—"Is that the way you'd beat me down?"
John strikes my hand and goes away.
And then comes back again to say
He'll not break Jim Molony's word.
(We all say that, we're so absurd)
And so at last the bargain's struck;
It's left to me about the luck.
"Begob!" says Mick, "for all his tricks
They're dear enough at nine twelve six."
So later on when we've been paid,
We'll drink their health in lemonade.

(The devil sweep those pledges.)

Hherded with others, scores and scores,
Our bullocks, mixed with cows and stores,
Are driven through the thronging fair
Out to the railway station, where

EDWARD E. LYSAGHT

Numbers of trucks, all just the same,
Swallow the beasts we knew by name,
Which lose in leaving Mick and me
Their individuality.

God ! on what venture ye embark,
To feed at length some city clerk
Whose widest world is Blackpool.

THOMAS MACDONAGH

TO EOGHAN

WILL you gaze after the dead, gaze into the grave ?—
Strain your eyes in the darkness, knowing it vain ?
Strain your voice in the silence that never gave
To any voice or yours an answer again ?

She whom you loved long years is dead, and you
Stay, and you cannot bear it and cry for her—
And life will cure this pain—or death : you too
Shall quiet lie where cries no echo stir.

*From Thomas MacDonagh's "Poems," by kind
permission of the Talbot Press, Ltd., Dublin.*

JOHN FRANCIS MACENTEE

I MADE MY LOVE A LITTLE SECRET HOUSE

I MADE my love a little secret house,
Of emerald moss and silver birchen boughs,
 Wherein to while away the sunny hours ;
And in the roof I set a bubble, bright
With rainbow colours of the moon, and light,
Soft, golden radiance of the dew-drenched
 flowers.

I made my thoughts her silent servitors,
Clad them in soft, sad, silvery gossamers,
Weft in the twilight by a dryad sighing
For a forsaken love. I draped the walls
With blue-grey curtains of the night that falls,
Star-sprinkled, when the autumn-time is dying.

And all the little songs of love that die
Unbirthéd in the heart's satiety,
The little whispers that the noisy world
Hath deadened into silence : these I brought
To be her minstrels, that her sleep be fraught
 With quietude, as flower in slumber furled.

JOHN FRANCIS MACENTEE

And then I led her in. She gazed around,
As though with all the quietness astound :
She lifted up her little mouth to speak ;
Tremoured a little, while her frightened eyes
Grew bright, then dark, and dark, as daylight dies ;
And life and colour faded from her cheek.

She looked at me and said : “ Ah, let me live,
I love the sun, the mountain-winds that give
Spontaneous struggle : all the white and red
Of life. Dream-shackled, Love, I could not bide.”
Taking her hand I led my love outside
And let her go. The dream I dreamed was dead.

*From J. F. MacEntee's “Poems,” by kind
permission of the Talbot Press, Ltd., Dublin.*

PATRICK MACGILL

DEDICATION

I SPEAK with a proud tongue of the people who were
And the people who are,
The worthy of Ardara, the Rosses and Inishkeel,
My kindred—
The people of the hills and the dark-haired passes
My neighbours on the lift of the brae,
In the lap of the valley.

To them Slainthe !

I speak of the old men,
The wrinkle-rutted,
Who dodder about foot-weary—
For their day is as the day that has been and is
no more—
Who warm their feet by the fire,
And recall memories of the times that are gone ;
Who kneel in the lamplight and pray
For the peace that has been theirs—
And who beat one dry-veined hand against another
Even in the sun—
For the coldness of death is on them.

I speak of the old women
Who danced to yesterday's fiddle
And dance no longer.

PATRICK MACGILL

They sit in a quiet place and dream
And see visions
Of what is to come,
Of their issue,
Which has blossomed to manhood and womanhood—
And seeing thus
They are happy
For the day that was leaves no regrets,
And peace is theirs,
And perfection.

I speak of the strong men
Who shoulder their burdens in the hot day,
Who stand on the market-place
And bargain in loud voices,
Showing their stock to the world.
Straight the glance of their eyes—
Broad-shouldered,
Supple.
Under their feet the holms blossom,
The harvest yields.
And their path is of prosperity.

I speak of the women,
Strong-hipped, full-bosomed,
Who drive the cattle to graze at dawn,
Who milk the cows at dusk.
Grace in their homes,
And in the crowded ways
Modest and seemly—
Mother of children !

PATRICK MACGILL

I speak of the children
Of the many townlands,
Blossoms of the Bogland,
Flowers of the Valley,
Who know not yesterday, nor to-morrow,
And are happy,
The pride of those who have begot them.

And thus it is,
Ever and always,
In Ardara, the Rosses and Inishkeel—
Here, as elsewhere,
The Weak, the Strong, and the Blossoming—
And thus my kindred.

To them Slainthe.

SUSAN MITCHELL

THE LIVING CHALICE

THE Mother sent me on the holy quest
Timid and proud and curiously dressed
In vestures by her hand wrought wondrously ;
An eager burning heart she gave to me.
The Bridegroom's Feast was set and I drew nigh—
Master of Life, Thy Cup has passed me by.

Before new-dressed I from the Mother came,
In dreams I saw the wondrous Cup of Flame ;
Ah, Divine Chalice, how my heart drank deep,
Waking I sought the Love I knew asleep.
The Feast of Life was set and I drew nigh—
Master of Life, Thy Cup has passed me by.

Eyes of the Soul, awake, awake and see
Growing within the Ruby Radiant Tree,
Sharp pain hath wrung the Clusters of my Vine ;
My heart is rose-red with its brimmèd wine.
Thou hast new-set the Feast and I draw nigh—
Master of Life take me, Thy Cup am I.

“ MOIRA O’NEILL ”

CORRYMEELA

OVER here in England I’m helpin’ wi’ the hay,
An’ I wisht I was in Ireland the livelong day ;
Weary on the English hay, an’ sorra take the wheat !
Och ! Corrymeela an’ the blue sky over it.

There’s a deep dumb river flowin’ by beyont the
heavy trees,
This livin’ air is moithered wi’ the hummin’ o’ the
bees ;
I wisht I’d hear the Claddagh burn go runnin’
through the heat
Past Corrymeela wi’ the blue sky over it.

The people that’s in England is richer nor the Jews,
There’s not the smallest young gossoon but thravels
in his shoes !
I’d give the pipe between me teeth to see a barefut
child,
Och ! Corrymeela an’ the low south wind.

Here’s hands so full o’ money an’ hearts so full o’ care,
By the luck of love ! I’d still go light for all I
did go bare.
“ God save ye, colleen dhas,” I said : the girl she
thought me wild !
Far Corrymeela, an’ the low south wind.

“MOIRA O’NEILL”

D’ye mind me now, the song at night is mortal
hard to raise,
The girls are heavy goin’ here, the boys are ill to
plase ;
When ones’t I’m out this workin’ hive, ’tis I’ll be
back again—
Aye, Corrymeela, in the same soft rain.

The puff o’ smoke from one ould roof before an
English Town !
For a *shaugh* wid Andy Feelan here I’d give a silver
crown,
For a curl o’ hair like Mollie’s ye’ll ask the like in
vain,
Sweet Corrymeela, an’ the same soft rain.

SEUMAS O'SULLIVAN

THE ROSSES

My sorrow that I am not by the little dun
By the lake of the starlings at Rosses under the
hill,
And the larks there, singing over the fields of dew,
Or evening there, and the sedges still.
For plain I see now the length of the yellow sand,
And Lissadell far off and its leafy ways,
And the holy mountain whose mighty heart
Gather into it all the coloured days.
My sorrow that I am not by the little dun
By the lake of the starlings at evening when all
is still,
And still in whispering sedges the herons stand,
'Tis there I would nestle at rest till the quivering
moon
Uprose in the golden quiet over the hill.

SEUMAS O'SULLIVAN

THE TWILIGHT PEOPLE

It is a whisper among the hazel bushes ;
It is a long, low, whispering voice that fills
With a sad music the bending and swaying rushes ;
It is a heart-beat deep in the quiet hills.

Twilight people, why will you still be crying,
Crying and calling to me out of the trees ?
For under the quiet grass the wise are lying,
And all the strong ones are gone over the seas.

And I am old, and in my heart at your calling
Only the old dead dreams a-fluttering go ;
As the wind, the forest wind, in its falling
Sets the withered leaves fluttering to and fro.

P. H. PEARSE

A WOMAN OF THE MOUNTAIN KEENS HER SON

(English Version)

GRIEF on the death, it has blackened my heart :
It has snatched my love and left me desolate,
Without friend or companion under the roof of my
house
But this sorrow in the midst of me, and I keening.

As I walked the mountain in the evening
The birds spoke to me sorrowfully,
The sweet snipe spoke and the voiceful curfew
Relating to me that my darling was dead.

I called to you and your voice I heard not,
I called again and I got no answer,
I kissed your mouth, and O God, how cold it
was !
Ah, cold is your bed in the lonely churchyard.

O green-sodded grave in which my child is,
Little narrow grave, since you are his bed,
My blessing on you, and thousands of blessings
On the green sods that are over my treasure.

P. H. PEARSE

Grief on the death, it cannot be denied,
It lays low, green and withered together,—
And O gentle little son, what tortures me is
That your fair body should be making clay !

P. H. PEARSE

THE WAYFARER (English Version)

THE beauty of the world hath made me sad,
This beauty that will pass ;
Sometimes my heart hath shaken with great joy
To see a leaping squirrel in a tree,
Or a red lady-bird upon a stalk,
Or little rabbits in a field at evening,
Lit by a slanting sun,
Or some green hill where shadows drifted by
Some quiet hill where mountainy man hath sown
And soon would reap ; near to the gate of Heaven ;
Or children with bare feet upon the sands
Of some ebbed sea, or playing on the streets
Of little towns in Connacht,
Things young and happy.
And then my heart hath told me :
These will pass,
Will pass and change, will die and be no more,
Things bright and green, things young and happy ;
And I have gone upon my way
Sorrowful.

JOSEPH M. PLUNKETT

WHITE DOVE OF THE WILD DARK EYES

WHITE Dove of the wild dark eyes
Faint silver flutes are calling
From the night where the star-mists rise
And fire-flies falling
Tremble in starry wise,
Is it you they are calling ?

White Dove of the beating heart
Shrill golden reeds are thrilling
In the woods where the shadows start,
While moonbeams, filling
With dreams the floweret's heart
Its dreams are thrilling.

White Dove of the folded wings,
Soft purple night is crying
With the voice of fairy things
For you, lest dying
They miss your flashing wings,
Your splendorous flying.

From J. M. Plunkett's "Poems," by kind permission of the Talbot Press, Ltd., Dublin.

T. W. ROLLESTON

SONG OF MAELDUIN

THERE are veils that lift, there are bars that fall,
There are lights that beckon, and winds that call—
Good-bye !

There are hurrying feet, and we dare not wait,
For the hour is on us—the hour of Fate,
The circling hour of the flaming gate—
Good-bye—good-bye—good-bye !

Fair, fair they shine through the burning zone—
The rainbow gleams of a world unknown ;
Good-bye !

And oh ! to follow, to seek, to dare,
When, step by step, in the evening air
Floats down to meet us the cloudy stair !
Good-bye—good-bye—good-bye !

The cloudy stair of the Brig o' Dread
Is the dizzy path that our feet must tread—
Good-bye !

O children of Time—O Nights and Days,
That gather and wonder and stand at gaze,
And wheeling stars in your lonely ways,
Good-bye—good-bye—good-bye !

T. W. ROLLESTON

The music calls and the gates unclose,
Onward and onward the wild way goes—
Good-bye !

We die in the bliss of a great new birth,
O fading phantoms of pain and mirth,
O fading loves of the old green earth—
Good-bye—good-bye—good-bye !

T. W. ROLLESTON

THE DEAD AT CLONMACNOIS

From the Irish of Enoch O' Gillan

IN a quiet water'd land, a land of roses,
Stands Saint Kieran's city fair :
And the warriors of Erin in their famous generations
Slumber there.

There beneath the dewy hillside sleep the noblest
Of the clan of Conn,
Each below his stone with name in branching Ogham
And the sacred knot thereon.

There they laid to rest the seven Kings of Tara,
There the sons of Cairbré sleep—
Battle-banners of the Gael, that in Kieran's plain
of crosses
Now their final hosting keep.

And in Clonmaenois they laid the men of Teffia,
And right many a lord of Breagh ;
Deep the sod above Clan Creidé and Clan Conaill,
Kind in hall and fierce in fray.

Many and many a son of Conn, the Hundred-Fighter,
In the red earth lies at rest ;
Many a blue eye of Clan Colman the turf covers,
Many a swan-white breast.

R. ROWLEY

THINKIN' LONG

It's time the lamp was lit,
A sit my lone,
Watchin' the firelight play
On the cracked hearth-stone.
Oul' dreams go through my head,
Like words o' a song.
A'm sittin' here my lone,
An' A'm thinkin' long.

A poor oul' doitered man
That yammers an' girns,
A was quarely differ'nt onceet
Wi' wife an' bairns.
The house was full o' weans
All straight an' strong,
It's desp'rit empty now,
An A'm thinkin' long.

It's time the lamp was lit—
Oeh, let it stan' !
What need is there o' light
For an oul' done man ?
The house is empty now,
An' the Kirkyard throng ;
A'm sittin' here my lone,
An A'm thinkin' long.

R. ROWLEY

WITCHCRAFT

Big Alec o' the Hill
Is a strong farmer, an' rich ;
Oul' Biddy in the loanin'
Is poor, an' a witch.

Big Alec is failin'
He dwinnles an' wastes ;
The blight's in his pitaties,
The murrain's on his bastes.

Big Alec sits an' wonders,
An' thinks, but doesn't know
The ill-turn he done Biddy
Twenty years ago.

The good Lord protect us
From secret harms !
A wouldn't stan' in big Alec's shoes
For all his farms.

DORA SIGERSON

CAN DOOV DEELISH

CAN Doov DEELISH, beside the sea
I stand and stretch my hands to thee
Aeross the world.
The riderless horses race to shore
With thundering hoofs and shuddering, hoar,
Blown manes uncurled.

Can doov deelish, I ery to thee
Beyond the world, beneath the sea,
Thou being dead.

Where hast thou hidden from the beat
Of crushing hoofs and tearing feet
Thy dear black head ?

God bless the woman, whoever she be,
From the tossing waves will recover thee
And lashing wind.

Who will take thee out of the wind and storm,
Dry thy wet face on her bosom warm
And lips so kind ?

I not to know. It is hard to pray,
But I shall for this woman from day to day,
“ Comfort my dead,
The sport of the winds and the play of the sea.”
I loved thee too well for this thing to be,
O dear black head !

DORA SIGERSON

THE COMFORTERS

WHEN I crept over the hill, broken with tears,
When I crouched down on the grass, dumb in despair,
I heard the soft croon of the wind bend to my ears,
I felt the light kiss of the wind touching my hair.

When I stood lone on the height my sorrow did speak,
As I went down the hill, I cried and I cried,
The soft little hands of the rain stroking my cheek,
The kind little feet of the rain ran by my side.

When I went to thy grave, broken with tears,
When I crouched down in the grass, dumb in despair,
I heard the sweet croon of the wind soft in my ears,
I felt the kind lips of the wind touching my hair.

When I stood lone by thy cross, sorrow did speak,
When I went down the long hill, I cried and I cried,
The soft little hands of the rain stroked my pale cheek,
The kind little feet of the rain ran by my side.

JAMES STEPHENS

BLUE STARS AND GOLD

WHILE walking through the trams and cars
I chanced to look up at the sky,
And saw that it was full of stars.

So starry-sown that you could not,
With any care, have stuck a pin
Through any single vacant spot.

And some were shining furiously,
And some were big and some were small,
But all were beautiful to see.

Blue stars and gold, a sky of grey,
The air between a velvet pall ;
I could not take my eyes away.

And there I sang this little psalm
Most awkwardly, because I was
Standing between a car and tram.

JAMES STEPHENS

IN THE POPPY FIELD

MAD PATSY said, he said to me,
That every morning he could see
An angel walking on the sky ;
Across the sunny skies of morn
He threw great handfuls far and nigh
Of poppy seed among the corn ;
And then, he said, the angels run
To see the poppies in the sun.

A poppy is a devil weed,
I said to him—he disagreed :
He said the devil had no hand
In spreading flowers tall and fair
Through corn and rye and meadow land,
By garth and barrow everywhere :
The devil has not any flower,
But only money in his power.

And then he stretched out in the sun
And rolled upon his back for fun :
He kicked his legs and roared for joy
Because the sun was shining down,
He said he was a little boy
And would not work for any clown :
He ran and laughed behind a bee,
And danced for very ecstasy.

JAMES STEPHENS

O'CONNELL BRIDGE

IN Dublin town the people see
Gorgeous clouds sail gorgeously,
They are finer, I declare,
Than the clouds of anywhere.

A swirl of blue and red and green,
A stream of blinding gold, a sheen
From silver hill and pearly ridge
Comes each evening on the bridge.

So when you walk in a field, look down,
Lest you tramp on a daisy's crown,
But in a city look always high
And watch the beautiful clouds go by.

JAMES STEPHENS

STEPHEN'S GREEN

THE wind stood up and gave a shout ;
He whistled on his fingers, and
Kicked the withered leaves about
And thumped the branches with his hand,
And said he'd kill, and kill, and kill,
And so he will, and so he will.

JAMES STEPHENS

THE RED-HAIRED MAN'S WIFE

I HAVE taken that vow—
And you were my friend
But yesterday—now
All that's at an end,
And you are my husband, and claim me, and I
must depend.

Yesterday I was free,
Now you, as I stand,
Walk over to me
And take hold of my hand.
You look at my lips, your eyes are too bold, your
smile is too bland.

My old name is lost,
My distinction of race :
Now the line has been crossed,
Must I step to your pace ?
Must I walk as you list, and obey, and smile up
in your face ?

All the white and the red
Of my checks you have won ;
All the hair of my head,
And my feet, tho' they run,
Are yours, and you own me and end me just as
I begun.

JAMES STEPHENS

Must I bow when you speak,
Be silent and hear,
Inclining my cheek
And incredulous ear
To your voicee, and command, and behest, hold
your lightest wish dear ?

I am woman, but still
Am alive, and can feel
Every intimate thrill
That is woe or is weal.
I, aloof, and divided, apart, standing far, can I kneel ?

O if kneeling were right,
I should kneel nor be sad,
And abase in your sight
All the pride that I had,
I should come to you, hold to you, cling to you,
call to you, glad.

If not, I shall know,
I shall surely find out,
And your world will throw
In disaster and rout ;
I am woman and glory and beauty, I mystery,
terror, and doubt.

I am separate still,
I am I and not you :
And my mind and my will,
As in secret they grew,
Still are secret, unreached and untouched and not
subject to you.

JAMES STEPHENS

THE SNARE

To A. E.

I HEAR a sudden cry of pain !
There is a rabbit in a snare :
Now I hear the cry again,
But I cannot tell from where.

But I cannot tell from where
He is calling out for aid ;
Crying on the frightened air,
Making everything afraid.

Making everything afraid,
Wrinkling up his little face,
As he cries again for aid ;
And I cannot find the place !

And I cannot find the place
Where his paw is in the snare :
Little one ! Oh, little one !
I am searching everywhere.

HERBERT TRENCH

A SONG TO AROLILIA DWELLER BY THE FOUNTAIN

WHEN you were born, the Earth obeyed ;
(Call her, Echo !)

Fragranceies from the distance blew,
Beanfields and violets were made,
And jasmine by the cypress grew—
Jasmine by the cloudy yew—

(Call her, Echo !)
Call Arolilia by her name !)

When you were born, despairs must die,
(Call her, Echo !)

Sweet tongues were loosened from a spell—
Snow mountains glistened from on high
And torrents to the valleys fell—
A song into Man's bosom fell—

(Call her, Echo !)
Call Arolilia by her name !)

When you were born, hid lightning's shape
(Call her, Echo !)

Took up the poor man's altar coal,
His green vine throbbed into the grape,
And in the dastard sprang a soul—
Even in the dastard sprang a soul—

(Call her, Echo !)
Call Arolilia by her name !)

HERBERT TRENCH

When you were born, all golden shot
(Call her, Echo !)

Fountains of daybreak from the sea,
And still, if near I find you not—
If steps I hear, but you come not—
Darkness lies on the world for me !

(Call her, Echo !
Call Arolilia by her name !)

HERBERT TRENCH

EPITAPH ON AN INFANT

HOUSE upon the Earth, be sad,
Lacking me thou mightst have had ! . . .
Many æons did I wait
For admission to the Gate
Of the Living. But to see
Much was not vouchsafed to me,
Dazzled, in my little span.
I, that hoped to be a man,
Like a snowflake incarnated
Seem for three days light created.

I saw two Eyes, and break of Day
Gold on spires of Nineveh.
But, ere I one comrade made,
Or with a fellow Beastling played—
Even while voices I forgot
Called from cloud and minaret
Men to wake—I stood once more
With the Dreams, outside the door.

HERBERT TRENCH

SONG OF THE VINE IN ENGLAND

MAN.

O VINE along my garden wall
Could I thine English slumber break,
And thee from wintry exile disenthral,
Where would thy spirit wake ?

VINE.

I would wake at the hour of dawning in May in Italy,
When rose mists rise from the Magra's valley plains
In the fields of maize and olives around Pontrémioli
When peaks grow golden and clear and the starlight
wanes :

I would wake to the dance of the sacred mountains,
boundlessly
Kindling their marble snows in the rite of fire,
To them my newborn tendrils softly and soundlessly
Would uncurl and aspire.

I would hang no more on thy wall a rusted slumberer,
Listless and fruitless, strewing the pathways cold,
I would seem no more in thine eyes an idle cumberer
Profitless alien, bitter and sere and old.

HERBERT TRENCH

In some warm terraed dell where the Roman rioted
And still in tiers his stony theatre heaves,
Would I festoon with leaf-light his glory quieted
 And flake his thrones with leaves.

Doves from the mountain belfries would seek and
 eling to me
To drink from the altar, winnowing the fragrant
 airs ;
Women from olived hillsides by turns would sing
 to me
Beating the olives, or stooping afield in pairs ;
On gala evenings the gay little carts of labourers
Swinging from axles their horns against evil eye
And crowded with children, revellers, pipers and
 taborers
 Chanting would pass me by. . . .

There go the pale blue shadows so light and
 showery
Over sharp Apuan peaks—rathe mists unwreathe—
Almond trees wake, and the paven yards grow
 flowery—
Croeuses cry from the earth at the joy to
 breathe ;
There through the deep-eaved gateways of haughty-
 turreted
Arno—house-laden bridges of strutted stalls—
Mighty white oxen drag in the jars rich-spirited
 Grazing the narrow walls !

HERBERT TRENCH

Wine-jars I too have filled, and the heart was thrilled
with me !

Brown-limbed on shady turf the families lay,
Shouting they bowled the bowls, and old men filled
with me

Roused the September twilight with songs that day.
Lanterns of sun and moon the young children
flaunted me,

Plaiters of straw from doorway to window cried—
Borne through the city gates the great oxen vaunted
me,

Swaying from side to side.

Wine-jars out of my leafage that once so vitally
Throbbed into purple, of me thou shalt never take :
Thy heart would remember the towns on the branch
of Italy,

And teaching to throb I should teach it, perchance,
to break.

It would beat for those little cities, rock-hewn and
mellowing

Festooned from summit to summit, where still
sublime

Murmur her temples, lovelier in their yellowing
Than in the morn of time.

I from the scorn of frost and the wind's iniquity
Barren, aloft in that golden air would thrive :
My passionate rootlets draw from that hearth's
antiquity

Whirls of profounder fire in us to survive—

HERBERT TRENCH

Serried realms of our fathers would swell and foam
with us—
Juice of the Latin sunrise ; your own sea-flung
Rude and far-wandered race might again find home
with us,
Leaguing with old Rome, young.

HERBERT TRENCH

WHO ART THOU, STARRY GHOST

Who art thou, starry ghost,
That ridest on the air
At head of all the host,
And art so burning-eyed
For all thy strengthlessness ?
World, I am no less
Than She whom thou hast awaited ;
She who remade a Poland out of nothingness,
And hath created
Ireland, out of a breath of pride
In the reed-bed of despair.

KATHERINE TYNAN

FAREWELL

Not soon shall I forget—a sheet
Of golden water, cold and sweet,
The young moon with her head in veils
Of silver, and the nightingales.

A wain of hay came up the lane—
O fields I shall not walk again,
And trees I shall not see, so still
Against a sky of daffodil !

Fields where my happy heart had rest,
And where my heart was heaviest,
I shall remember them at peace
Drenched in moon-silver like a fleece.

The golden water sweet and cold,
The moon of silver and of gold,
The dew upon the gray grass-spears,
I shall remember them with tears.

KATHERINE TYNAN

THE OLD LOVE

OUT of my door I step into
The country, all her scent and dew,
Nor travel there by a hard road,
Dusty and far from my abode.

The country washes to my door
Green miles on miles in soft uproar,
The thunder of the woods, and then
The backwash of green surf again.

Beyond the feverfew and stocks,
The guelder-rose and hollyhocks ;
Outside my trellised porch a tree
Of lilac frames a sky for me.

A stretch of primrose and pale green
To hold the tender Hesper in ;
Hesper that by the moon makes pale
Her silver keel and silver sail.

The country silence wraps me quite,
Silence and song and pure delight ;
The country beckons all the day
Smiling, and but a step away.

KATHERINE TYNAN

This is that country seen across
How many a league of love and loss,
Prayed for and longed for, and as far
As fountains in the desert are.

This is that country at my door,
Whose fragrant airs run on before,
And call me when the first birds stir
In the green wood to walk with her.

KATHERINE TYNAN

THE PRAYER

SHE drew the grey shawl round her head ;
“ Sure it is bitter cold,” she said ;
“ An’ is there news of him, asthore ? ”
God help the mothers of the world !

“ I do be prayin’ to mesel’
The Lord may keep him safe and well
An’ bring him baek to his mother’s door.”
God help the mothers of the world !

“ The lambs are perished wid the storm.
God keep his darlin’ head from harm !
It’s well for her has ne’er a one ! ”
God help the mothers of the world !

And as I went my way I heard
Her call like a lamenting bird :
“ I used to fret that had no son.”
God help the mothers of the world !

W. B. YEATS

DOWN BY THE SALLEY GARDENS

Down by the salley gardens my love and I did meet ;

She passed the salley gardens with little snow-white feet.

She bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow on the tree ;

But I, being young and foolish, with her would not agree.

In a field by the river my love and I did stand,
And on my leaning shoulder she laid her snow-white hand.

She bid me take life easy, as the grass grows on the weirs ;

But I was young and foolish, and now am full of tears.

RUNNING
TO PARADISE

As I came over Windy Gap
They threw a halfpenny into my cap,
For I am running to Paradise ;
And all that I need do is to wish
And somebody puts his hand in the dish
To throw me a bit of salted fish :
And there the king *is* but as the beggar.

My brother Mourteen is worn out
With skelping his big brawling lout,
And I am running to Paradise ;
A poor life do what he can,
And though he keep a dog and a gun,
A serving maid and a serving man :
And there the king *is* but as the beggar.

Poor men have grown to be rich men,
And rich men grown to be poor again,
And I am running to Paradise ;
And many a darling wit's grown dull
That tossed a bare heel when at school,
Now it has filled an old sock full :
And there the king *is* but as the beggar.

W. B. YEATS

The wind is old and still at play
While I must hurry upon my way,
For I am running to Paradise ;
Yet never have I lit on a friend
To take my fancy like the wind
That nobody can buy or bind :
And there the king *is* but as the beggar.

THE LAKE ISLE
OF INNISFREE

I WILL arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles
made :

Nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the
honey bee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

And I shall have some peace there, for peace comes
dropping slow,

Dropping from the veils of the morning to where
the cricket sings ;

There midnight's all aglimmer, and noon a purple
glow,

And evening full of the linnet's wings.

I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the
shore ;

While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements
gray,

I hear it in the deep heart's core.

THE SORROW
OF LOVE

THE quarrel of the sparrows in the eaves,
The full round moon and the star-laden sky,
And the loud song of the ever-singing leaves,
Had hid away earth's old and weary cry.

And then you came with those red mournful lips,
And with you came the whole of the world's tears
And all the trouble of her labouring ships,
And all the trouble of her myriad years.

And now the sparrows warring in the eaves,
The curd-pale moon, the white stars in the sky,
And the loud chaunting of the unquiet leaves,
Are shaken with earth's old and weary cry.

W. B. YEATS

THE WILD SWANS AT COOLE

THE trees are in their autumn beauty,
The woodland paths are dry,
Under the October twilight the water
Mirrors a still sky ;
Upon the brimming water among the stones
Are nine and fifty swans.

The nineteenth Autumn has come upon me
Since I first made my count ;
I saw, before I had well finished,
All suddenly mount
And scatter wheeling in great broken rings
Upon their clamorous wings.

I have looked upon those brilliant creatures,
And now my heart is sore.
All's changed since I, hearing at twilight,
The first time on this shore,
The bell-beat of their wings above my head,
Trod with a lighter tread.

W. B. YEATS

Unwearied still, lover by lover,
They paddle in the cold,
Companionable streams or climb the air ;
Their hearts have not grown old ;
Passion or conquest, wander where they will,
Attend upon them still.

But now they drift on the still water
Mysterious, beautiful ;
Among what rushes will they build,
By what lake's edge or pool
Delight men's eyes when I awake some day
To find they have flown away ?

W. B. YEATS

TO THE ROSE UPON THE ROOD OF TIME

RED Rose, proud Rose, sad Rose of all my days !

Come near me, while I sing the ancient ways :
Cuchulain battling with the bitter tide ;
The Druid, gray, wood-nurtured, quiet-eyed,
Who cast round Fergus dreams, and ruin untold ;
And thine own sadness, whereof stars, grown old
In dancing silver sandalled on the sea,
Sing in their high and lonely melody.
Come near, that no more blinded by man's fate,
I find under the boughs of love and hate,
In all poor foolish things that live a day,
Eternal beauty wandering on her way.

Come near, come near, come near—Ah, leave me still

A little space for the rose-breath to fill !
Lest I no more hear common things that crave ;
The weak worm hiding down in its small cave,
The field mouse running by me in the grass,
And heavy mortal hopes that toil and pass ;
But seek alone to hear the strange things said
By God to the bright hearts of those long dead,

W. B. YEATS

And learn to chaunt a tongue men do not know.
Come near ; I would, before my time to go,
Sing of old Eire and the ancient ways :
Red Rose, proud Rose, sad Rose of all my days.

WHEN YOU
ARE OLD

WHEN you are old and gray and full of sleep,
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep.

How many loved your moments of glad grace,
And loved your beauty with love false or true ;
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face.

And bending down beside the glowing bars
Murmur, a little sadly, how love fled
And paced upon the mountains overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

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